



Weekly Tech Wrap-up 4/12/2013

What We Have Learned

My Big Campus

MBC Now Offers SkyDrive Integration

This means that when you search for a document or file in MBC what you have stored in SkyDrive is visible and able to be attached to assignments, etc. You will need to go into the Applications section of your account (the “gearhead” icon). Click on this link for [the “official” How-to Guide](#) from MBC. Happy Driving!



One Teacher’s Description of How She Has Increased Rigor with MBC

Mrs. Gwendolyn Christmas, who teaches 8th Grade Science and Pre-AP Science in the Keller ISD (TX), posted a wonderful description of how she ensures the digital lessons she assigns to her students have them working with higher-ordered thinking skills. She has graciously allowed (through a conversation in MBC) me to share her post with you all. The second paragraph explains how digital resources have transformed her classes and improved the quality of time she and her students have together in the classroom. You can view her MBC Wall with [this link](#). Here is what she posted earlier today.

“I have taken my class paperless this year, and have found that I have put MORE rigor into my lessons with the help of MBC. That does not always mean grading is done automatically, I have to read many more open ended answers and as the year has progressed, my 8th graders are really writing complete thoughts for their answers. The advantage I get with MBC for that is I can grade anywhere I have internet access,

... I teach science and have put MBC to the test this year. My students still label diagrams, do some labs (ones that involve liquids or dropping computers we still use paper), essay, fill in the blank, and the multiple choice questions. We have done vocabulary projects where the kids made 30-45 second videos demonstrating what the words mean, power point projects, and rather than watching a GREAT NOVA video in class for 3 class periods, I gave the kids 10 days to watch at home, write down facts from 20-25 minute segments of the video, then write a review of the video, and on the day the project was due we had a class discussion of the video content. The discussion we had was fantastic, and as the kids watched the video, they would send me comments and ask questions. The video is a great review for our state test coming very soon...

I think to get the most out of MBC, teachers need to think outside the box and get creative. Going digital doesn't mean everything HAS to be multiple choice. It also doesn't always mean grading is going to be faster and less time consuming. But for me it does mean as I put more rigor into my lessons keeping track of assignments is easier, and the lack of paper everywhere is awesome. When we do a paper assignment and my desk is covered in paper piles I go nuts! I feel overwhelmed and can't wait to get back to digital assignments.”

From the Tech Department

There have been changes to the login procedure for BYOD. (This is why having the students pilot the program is so helpful.) Those using the FASD_BOYD network no longer have to enter their username and password.



FHS 101

Earlier this week Mrs. Pam Kerr's Trigonometry students we involved in a tech-rich lesson investigating the properties of right triangles. The class went outside to measure the length of shadows cast by several objects

around the school grounds (including some of their own shadows). They worked in pairs to record their data and then using that data they were tasked with determining the angle of the sun. To see how close they were to the actual angle of the sun the day they conducted the measurements they went to www.nano.mil and used the data service of the US Naval Observatory to check their calculations. They also used this data to predict what mis-steps in the process could have provided an incorrect answer and what time the sun would rise the next morning. Mrs. Kerr has used this lesson in the past and says that it is helpful for students to grasp the concepts in a real-world, three-dimensional setting.



TODAY ONLY - Free iPad App for Parents of Younger Children

Here is a link to an offer of a free iPad app sent to me by the instructor of the iPad course I took last summer. If you have small children or know someone who teaches young Math students this might be of interest. It is an excellent app for primary/early number sense.

[Native Numbers - Complete Number Sense Mastery Curriculum](#). The app was originally \$10 and dipped to \$4.99. Today, April 12th, it is FREE for a limited time. Teachers can put their whole class in online and track their individual progress through each level, building number sense skills and checking for mastery.

NOTE: When I get free app offers that may be time sensitive I download first and preview later. You can always delete a free app, but you cannot always download for free.

Finding Other Free Apps

One way to find free apps for your iPhone or iPad is to use the app Apps Gove Free. Each day this app will provide links to 10 apps that are free for that day. It isn't always 10 winners, but there are usually a good variety. Everything from voice recording a to-do list to easy games to have on hand in a pinch.

Looking Ahead

Blended Schools Network MOOC

The Blended Schools Network is hosting a massive online open course (MOOC) **starting on Monday, April 15, 2013, at 7pm**, (and running for five consecutive Mondays). This course is designed to address three key components of blended learning:

- Increasing student engagement
- Providing authentic assessment
- Differentiating instruction

This MOOC is **free** (as in **no cost**) to all and is designed for teachers to both build their pedagogical practice and connections with other educators. The Blended Schools Network is associated with the Blackboard LMS. While we do not use that specific product there is still a lot that can be learned about delivering digital content and applied to My Big Campus, our learning management system. Activities each week will include consuming course materials, curating quality resources and developing and critiquing new lessons. Participants should expect to spend about 3 hours per week preparing for each session.

For more information and registration go to:

<http://www.cvent.com/events/today-s-blended-teacher-a-mooc-made-for-community-and-curation/event-summary-dfb0d8f0803f4eb2995568ea92cd59b8.aspx>

FYI – At last count there were over 200 participants registered. It is shaping up to be a nice mixture of American k-12 public school teachers along with representatives of higher education, private and international schools. There will definitely be a broad range of views on how technology influences teaching and learning.